

Umbonowethu

November 2018



Thulani Buthelezi
MILL PLATFORM OPERATOR

in the Front-end Department, keeps a watchful eye on the diffuser spent bagasse carrier.

The First Word



The 2018 season saw the implementation of our new crushing philosophy that resulted in the setting of new record crush statistics of more than 7'000 tons in a day, more than 40'000 tons in a week and many weeks of less than 3% LTA per week; keep it up we have a few weeks to go! More impressive is the crush profile that shows that "where there is a will, there is a way"! Brilliant! At the end of November, we are on the home straight, and I hope we will have an ox braai in celebration of crushing more than 1.2 million tons of cane.

This edition of the Umbonowethu is packed with many of USM's highlights and celebrations, enjoy the read.

Unfortunately, the external environment has been less favourable. During the first part of 2018, cheap sugar imports outcompeted locally produced South African sugar and during the latter part of 2018, the adjusted import tariff was set at a level below the costs of locally produced sugar. Other challenges facing the South African sugar industry include:

- Escalating costs of compliance, particularly in the areas of environmental, food safety and transformation.
- Escalating costs associated with the onset of the fourth industrial revolution in terms of investment inefficiencies through automation and upskilling of staff.
- Escalating costs of training in general due to a smaller South African talent pool.
- Escalating equipment and labour costs.

It is no secret that all sugar milling and sugarcane growing operations in South Africa are struggling financially and "unless something changes" will become increasingly unsustainable. USM is in a more fortunate position than most because it is a grower-owned mill that produces an excellent product at a low cost. More importantly, we are a TEAM that operates "ABOVE THE LINE", which means we take ownership, accountability and responsibility for our challenges by proactively seeking out sustainable solutions. Again, this edition of the Umbonowethu is packed with many examples of "ABOVE THE LINE" and TEAMWORK behaviour that must be celebrated. However, there is work to be done, as highlighted in our recent culture survey feedback; all of us need to be practising better interpersonal respect and communication and considering good improvement ideas from all levels of the organisation. To facilitate these behaviours, a number of interventions are currently being considered for implementation in 2019. Everyone's participation is important in these challenging times to keep USM sustainable, not only for ourselves and our peers but also for the entire community that relies on USM for their well-being.

I am looking forward to working with the full USM TEAM in tackling the challenges of 2019, but I am also looking forward to the coming Christmas period of giving and sharing and celebrating life with family and friends; it will be a well-deserved break for all of us. For those of you who are Christians, I wish you a Merry Christmas, and I want to wish each and every one of you and your families a prosperous 2019.

As always, work smarter, work together, have fun and be safe!

Adey

Keeping our stakeholders in the loop

In taking its role as a community player seriously, Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM) communicates with its stakeholders on numerous relevant topics on a regular basis.

A Supplier Information Session was held on 18 October in the USM Boardroom. The purpose of the session was to advise the suppliers about the manner in which USM conducts its business and the required standards and performances.

Dr Adrian Wynne, CEO of USM, led the session on Developments in the Sugar Industry. Current hot topics such as transformation and sustainability imperatives in South Africa and notably in the sugar industry and at USM came under the loop.

Munroe Ramnaryian, procurement manager, was in charge of the next session on Procurement Practice. The following issues were addressed:

1. **Commercial compliance**
Conduct business with service providers that satisfy all statutory and legal obligations.
2. **Tender/quotation process**
Submissions must be made in accordance with the rules and standards stated in the document, not limited to a single service provider and no guarantee or promise for an award.
3. **Evaluation process**
Conducted on a commercial and technical basis.
4. **Award process**
Purchase Order (This is binding on the service provider and is not subject to any variations or price changes unless agreed upon before providing the service).
5. **Monitoring performance and quality standards**
Management and quality procedures and execution plan.
6. **Payment method**
Job card, delivery note, handover or payment certificate and commissioning certificate (accompanied with the invoice) Gwen Wareham, compliance manager, led the session on SHREQ and FS.

OHS – Occupational Health & Safety Act (85 of 1993)

- Section 8 – Duties of Employer
- Safety File – Compliant with all statutory requirements and USM Standards
- Induction before starting work

Security – All Security standards apply – Conduct on Site, Access Control, Alcohol Testing.

Quality & Food Safety – FSSC Certification (GMP's, GHP's).

Environment – Sparing use of water and energy, management of waste are non-negotiable.

Power gen team leads splendidly

The saying where there is a will, the way will follow is something that the power generation department at USM knows all too well.

This highly dedicated and spirited team under manager Johan Bester is not shy to show off in style! And they know how to do this with own initiative and in the most pressing circumstances too.

Case in point: in the run-up to closing down for year-end the team quickly turned a possible problem into a huge advantage for USM. When pressed with two boilers down, they all rolled up their sleeves and dug deep to crush a record 250 tons cane per hour for two full days instead of the normal 160 tons per hour!

According to Johan it all boils down to hard and splendid team work. *"Our biggest asset has always been that we operate as one team consistently. We fill in for each other if needed and help out when others are short-staffed. Each team*



The power of love was on full display earlier this year when USM decided to spoil employees working on Mother's and Father's Day. The power gen men from USM with their spoils captured here are Sfiso Manqele, Jackson Khoza, Siya Nxumalo, Dayalan Naicker and Nkulumo Mpontshane.

member is disciplined and focused on the task ahead."

No wonder this proud manager is convinced the power generation department has the best team by far at USM. In the end actions always speak the loudest and his team stay committed no matter what to deliver the sweet goods consistently.

The team's record achievement so late in the season is even more special as they were able to deliver the goods on Bagasse due to budget pressures. The boilers are usually started up with coal and then switch to bagasse but in October it was done from scratch on with bagasse for a full 30 days! This has now set the norm which his team aims to keep on following, explains Johan.

In reality it means that the team will no longer burn coal for production and stop the use of it completely. This enters in a new environmentally friendly phase for USM and was made possible by sheer commitment from his great colleagues whose skill and attention brought on the positive change, adds Johan.

According to him he is lucky as his team

motivates themselves. *"They are goal-orientated because they are acutely aware what must be done to survive and are able to put their hearts and minds behind our goals."*

Johan attributes his team's success over the last two years on being innovative first and foremost. *"We believe to keep going, even if the going gets tough and to keep asking questions and come up with plans to fix problems and to work more efficiently."*

This team clearly understand their role in the survival of the plant. With their steadfast motto that innovation brings positive changes to benefit all they have paved the way and showed what can be done.

Well done to Johan and his brilliant team who continues to lead by example!

Tough love for sweet success

A man with a sweet plan is Bhekani Dube, extraction manager at Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM). Bhekani, who is responsible for the front end of the plant, has a clear vision of what lies ahead for him and his USM team in 2019 after the record-breaking season they find themselves now in.

"The new year will bring fresh challenges and only hard work and the commitment and pulling together of every team member will enable us to repeat our success and to meet new targets timeously."

According to Bhekani this year was difficult at times and he is very proud of his team for tackling problems head-on and sticking it out. *"I know my workers are very tired by now, there were some tough times around but we were once more able to meet our main targets and even to be in front and set new crushing rates. We must keep this up."*

"At the same time we had to crush more cane than ever. It was not always easy but in the end we were able to meet deadlines and targets and even turn it to our advantage and got ahead with our targets."

Now towards the home stretch for the summer holiday break, he knows too well his team is tired and in need of proper rest. And so is the equipment. But before the break there are still last targets to be met right through till the end.

He knows his team have to stay fresh and focused and be productive until the mill closes in mid-December, stresses Bhekani.

For the much-needed break coming up, he has an important message to his team members. *"It is vital that we all rest properly over the festive season because fresh minds and bodies are needed for the challenges awaiting us and they will start in earnest in January in 2019."*

His team is currently ahead of the surplus that needs to be crushed and he wants to keep up this mindset and pace in 2019. He envisages a renewed team effort to push production levels to new highs next year.

He also strongly believes in the continuous development of his colleagues and wants to reassure them that personal training plans are already in place for the new year.

This manager knows all too well that his staff might perceive him to be sometimes hard and pushing it rigorously but it is not without reason. He wants them to know that in leading them in delivering tough targets he always has their wellbeing and interests at heart.

Bhekani appreciates every team member and their commitment towards their tasks. He wishes his colleagues and their loved ones proper rest and good times spend with loved ones over the festive season. *"Be blessed and come back fresh so that together we can continue to make a difference in the success story of USM,"* he says.



The USM team busy with tipper inspection at the South Carrier section earlier in the season.

A great year but we can do better



Zakhele Mabika (left) and Duduzile Ndabandaba collect their teams' production achievement celebratory t-shirts from HR. Each employee received a t-shirt to celebrate 'making it happen' at USM.

Looking back at the record-breaking year at Umfolozi Sugar Mill in 2018 makes him proud to be a part of the star-studded USM team.

This sentiment belongs to Vusi Tembe, human resources executive, at the mill. Vusi who has been ruling as HR Executive for the past five years takes his job and life in his stride. *"There will always be the bad with the good. Sometimes we are sad to lose workers with great skills and other times we gain good workers."*

In this year where employees made USM proud by literally crushing records, the work place was an exciting space to be, confirms Vusi. *"To witness my colleagues setting new records by crushing 7 000 tons of sugar cane per day and 42 000 tons per week, was a definite highlight for all of us."*

On the opposite side, the year did present some challenges but as Vusi explains, he likes what he does and is not shy to address issues pertaining to his high-profile job.

So how does this overseer of the human psyche at the plant motivate his subordinates? *"Every worker must be proud to be employed at USM. And understand how vital it is to be a willing team player and contribute to our collective success and ultimate survival."*

In 2019 he would like to see the already sound relationship between management and employees improve. *"We have made great strides which is evident in work performances and a plant which flourishes."*

"Now with the festive holiday fast coming up, is a good time to reflect on our successes in 2018 and also on how we can take it to the next level in the New Year," says Vusi.

He thanks every colleague for their hard work and loyalty to USM and wishes them all a blessed Christmas and prosperous 2019!

An old hand polishes potential at plant

From harvesting the sugar cane to putting sugar on the table is a long, fine-tuned production process which demands close working relations between all sections and teams at Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM).

The man responsible for coordinating this fine balance at the plant is Vis Pillay. Vis retired in June 2017 but his vast expertise and experience are still high in demand, and USM lured him back to ensure a finer geared process in the rollout of its products.

Since his return to the sugar industry on a contract basis as production manager at USM in June this year, Vis has left no stone unturned to make sure that the plant runs like a well-oiled machine. He is responsible for the back-end of the plant, focusing on process and factory performances.

Vis decided its action time when he noticed the high costs of packing material usage and that stocktaking in the 200-ton packing material store was inaccurate due to poor stacking and storage. He got the packing team together and applied the five "s" principles: removed all waste and redundant material and recycled to the supplier (cost recovery), and sorted and set all materials in the respective bays and labelled accordingly.

The packing foreman and his team together with the stores' management team shared the ideas and removed all redundant materials. The store is now shining with everything clean and functioning correctly. By removing waste, time is saved in identifying material and stocktaking. The reduced wastage has aligned the budgets with actual figures, and further opportunities are being explored to reduce usage.

His wealth of knowledge flows smoothly when he talks on how to motivate colleagues. *"People must be happy at their workplace to get the very best out of them."*

He strongly advocates rewarding workers for a job well done. At the same time, employees need to stay abreast and must have opportunities to keep learning and growing. Coaching and proper training is vital, adds Vis.

Therefore ongoing training and coaching stay firmly on his agenda, says Vis. As a manager at the back-end he focuses strongly on the customer. *"The sum is easy – no customer, no sugar, no money, no job."*

He cannot stress enough how vital synergy between all sections at USM is in maximising output at the plant and to keep customers happy. *"We can only perform optimally and productively if the mechanical and production teams function as seamless as possible. Machines and people are equally contributing to our success and survival."*

In 2019 Vis wants to focus on bringing down the failing equipment figures as it impacts productivity negatively. For Vis, the message to his fellow workers is always the same. Every worker must continue to equip themselves with more skills to stay relevant and in demand. The enormous human potential at USM makes him positive about the plant's future.

For now, he wishes his colleagues enough rest over the Christmas break to gather energy to tackle the new year with the same passion as in 2018.



Packing 'primadonnas' and proudly so! Vis Pillay, production manager at USM, and his eager colleagues who rolled up their sleeves and showed what teamwork really means. They took the initiative and cleaned up the packing material store at USM. We salute you all!

Sugar 'buff' passes on some sweet lessons...

Once your blood turns sweet, there is no way of ever turning it back because the sugar industry gets in your veins and its pleasures are priceless.

On the word is Deena Govender, engineering manager at USM. This seasoned sugar specialist has been with the KZN mill for one year. And it is home, sweet home for him.

"The sugar industry gets into your system. It always pulls you in or back," laughs Deena who has been all over the sugar show at mills in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland since 1979.

In between he also managed an oil factory and alcohol plant in neighbouring countries. But the lure of the sugar business proves to be too strong for Deena and he now has the pleasure to taste this sweet career passion at USM firsthand once more.

"Being part of a sugar mill gets the adrenaline pumping... every seasons brings its own challenges. There is a certain thrill to it. It is like writing an exam - you have prepared well and then can't wait for the result."

But even if you have put everything in place there is also the unknown and risks involved in the process such as unplanned problems with people and mechanical failures. *"Machines have personalities of their own and bags of nuts and bolts are always unpredictable. In the end it is all about how well you cope with these risks."*

And coping good, Deena and the USM team has done exceptionally well in 2018 with proudly breaking records and setting new crushing norms along the way!

It is surely his personal highlight for 2018 that the USM team pushed crush rates to new heights. After a long time the plant was able to crush 42000 tons of sugar cane per week and 7000 plus tons a day on at least six occasions!

According to Deena it was exciting to be part of this wonderful season and feat. *"For our size factory which can crush 300 tons per hour constantly, this is a great achievement and we will continue pushing it right to the top."*

Deena has more bright aspirations for the USM team in 2019. *"We have to get our Lost-time Available (LTA) to single digits."* He is adamantly aiming at an annual average LTA of 3%. It is part of the silver lining for USM out there, explains Deena.

The fact that his one-year stint at USM has been such a memorable year makes his return to the sugar industry so much sweeter, confirms Deena.

The engineer strongly believes in clear communication and to motivate his staff properly. He likes to lead from next to them and walks with them through the good and bad times. To encourage team members and to help them to be the best they can be is part of his management style, says Deena.

With the Christmas break coming up fast, he wants colleagues to stay safe and to work equally hard to build and maintain good



relations at home. *"We must enjoy our rest. It is important to remember home is where we recuperate and recharge our batteries. We need that as 2019 is packed with tough challenges to chase."*

For the youngsters who are aiming at better positions or even the top at USM he has a clear message. *"Stay hungry for knowledge and ask questions. To be eager to learn and inquisitive is the right mindset in building your career. And don't be afraid to get yourself dirty in the process."*

Golden lessons from this sugar expert who has a proud proven track record in the arena which he now pours out so sweetly at USM.

Applause for hard work and sticklers!

"You don't build a business. You build people, and people build the business." These wise words from the famous Yank salesman Zig Ziglar (1926-2012) is always in fashion and true of one fine sugar mill in KwaZulu-Natal.

The annual long list for long service awards at Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM) speaks volumes of how the company treats its workers. This year is no exception and the fact that almost 77 employees at USM will receive long service awards in 2018 is again a testament to the company's emphasis on the people who continue to build it.

A total of 77 workers with 10 years and more service at the sugar mill will be applauded with long service awards in 2018. This includes 71 employees with a decade-long service at USM, two with 15 years, one with 25 and 20 years, respectively and two with 30 years of working at the mill. This is a total of 845 years of combined service, indeed USM is a great employer.

Umbonowethu wishes to congratulate these men and woman who have stuck it out through the challenging periods and good times and who are still part of the superb team that helps keep USM in business and relevant!



In a 21st century revolving around short life spans, also in the workplace, loyalty has become an almost extinct quality. USM boasts a duo with an exceptional service record. Adey Wynne, CEO of USM, awarded JP Brouard (left of him) and Mandla Mfeka (to his right) with certificates to commemorate the 30-year long service milestone they have both reached in 2018. Well done to these two colleagues who inspire us with their positive loyalty towards the mill!

Active social partner in community building

No modern-day business can longer successfully flourish in isolation. Being part and parcel of the community fibre in which it spins, Enterprise Development and Corporate Social Investment is a vital necessity and bold strategic pursuit to position any business positively towards its employees, their extended families and interested parties within the surrounding areas in which it operates.

Against specific South African and often harsh realities, USM values this chance to actively impact on its local community by enhancing and developing skills of disadvantaged community members and contributing in the upliftment and beautification of the broader area. The corporate social investment and enterprise development activities of USM are aimed in support of community-based projects that are geared towards the creation of a stable and prosperous society.

Here... there...

Trees planted on Heritage Day

USM acknowledges public holidays dedicated to get important message across.

Heritage Day on Friday, 21 September was celebrated in a special way. Armed with local trees the group of "dressed-up" colleagues marched to the sports grounds where the trees were planted.

During the get together employees were encouraged to talk about trees and its symbolic importance in the circle of life.

With poem reading and the singing of the national anthem, USM'ers clearly showed their support and celebrated their heritage.



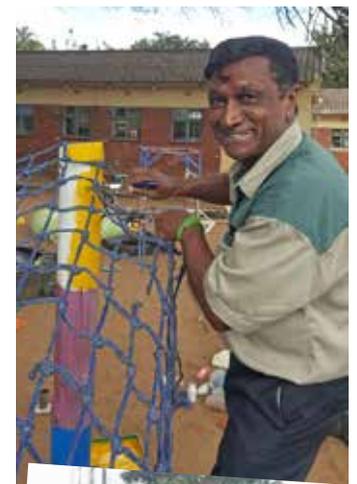
Kids' magical makeover on Madiba Day

Nelson Mandela's love for children was no secret and his birthday on 18 July was declared a special day for South Africans to do good will.

Not a year goes by that USM does not benefit a crèche in the area in which the company operates. This year was Super Kid Crèche and Day Care Centre's turn. The little crèche is home to 103 children from the ages of 1 to 7 years. On their wish list for a Madiba makeover was a Jojo water tank and paint for the playing equipment. The day started a few days prior with USM's civils team preparing the pipework for the installation of the Jojo.

USM employees mixed cement and painted for a full 67 minutes whereafter they were treated to cake, wors rolls and a beverage.

What an extraordinary way to commemorate, in our own backyard, the legacy of a wonderful change agent for our nation and role model to the entire human race, Nelson Mandela.



USM is everywhere!

Feeding schemes supported

Food security is an important social partnership for USM.

With this vital community project a total of 2 000 vegetable seedlings were distributed to six previous Mandela Day beneficiaries in support of their feeding schemes.

The beauty of this project is that it is a low value and high impact project. It is especially highly appreciated by the ladies who run the Early Childhood Development Centres.



Fun in the sun...

USM place a high premium on hard work in working hours but also strongly supports play and fun opportunities for its employees in between.

Each year just before the mill starts its production season the workers are invited to let their hair down for a bit of social fun in the sun. Being South African, sporting fun is just what is desired.

The day begins early - a variety of sports are played, such as netball, darts, volleyball, soccer and the great tug of war between management and shop stewards. The day is closed in a typical South African way with a braai and a beverage. This friendly bantering among staff also sets the stage for the great season at USM.



Library project = green wise

USM has partnered with iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority in a project to establish libraries in areas where literacy and access to books are poor.

The first two book collection libraries were launched on 12 June 2018 at Mzabalazo Primary School and Gilonki High School, respectively.

Most of the library books have an environmental theme, in the hope that access to information can be improved, a passion for books instilled and a culture of reading promoted.



USM extends hand to farmers

The USM Monzi Agri Show was held on 13 and 14 April this year in association with the Monzi farmers.

The expo started with a morning session including a review of the SA sugar industry. This was followed by speakers highlighting technical information and progress ranging from developing variety specific chemical ripening to long-term rainfall in mill supplying areas and investigating derivatives as a hedging mechanism against droughts and a sustainability system for biogas from sugarcane.

A gala dinner followed this serious side of the business in the evening. On Saturday, 14 April local farmers and residents from the area attended a local business exhibition where farming equipment was also on show.

The USM Monzi Agri Show is a USM grower relations project.

Strength to strength: Mtubatuba Sugar Tournament

For almost three decades USM supports the annual Mtubatuba Sugar Tournament, hosted by Mtubatuba Primary School.

In its 28th year in 2018, this day of goodwill first started in 1990. It remains a highlight on the annual calendar for close to a 1 000 primary school children.

During the event, a total of 11 primary schools from Richards Bay to Sodwana Bay play hockey, netball and rugby against each other.



Innovation = golden compass

The current wider economic climate and cycle of the sugar industry has proved difficult in the last quarter and over the last 12 months says Anesen Naidu, chief financial officer (CFO) at Umfolozi Sugar Mill.



Nduduzo Mbuyaze (right) receives a spot prize from Anesen Naidu (left) for his touching traditional dance during the company's Heritage Day celebrations.

"Cheaper imported sugar has had a severe impact on the profitability of the industry and all its stakeholders."

According to Anesen other challenges facing the South African sugar industry include rising costs and transformation imperatives, which is coupled by unprecedented technology changes globally and the ever present need for companies to stay competitive, relevant and sustainable.

He refers to the great Charles Darwin and likes to share this wisdom: *"It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change."*

In conveying his message to all employees at USM, Anesen focuses on two golden words: *"success"* and *"innovation"*.

On success he concludes that the definition of it is different for everyone. *"To truly understand all the aspects having an influence on the success of our company, one should look at the real driving force behind our success: USM employees."*

Anesen explains that USM employees are not only the face of the company but also the ones servicing the customers

and making the products. *"With each employee succeeding in everything we do, so too will the whole team effort contribute to the overall success of USM."*

He highlights the important tool of innovation. *"Creativity is the nature of creating something new, a new idea, concept or method. Innovation is using creativity to enhance performance of a process, person, team or organisation."*

To innovate, he states, is to intentionally let go of the *"way things are"* and welcome *"the way they could be"*.

The CFO elaborates that in the face of adversity, the long-term sustainability of USM will depend on the success of employees and their ability to provide innovation in all areas of the business.

"I challenge you to embrace the principles of success and innovation and together we can all make a positive difference in the face of adversity."

Powerful words from the top to every worker to take home and ponder over the festive break. It highlights the fact that team players who embrace change and innovation will be in demand and celebrate success and sustainability with USM.

Sweet way to heaven...

Sugar is sweet and to stack the stuff, well ever so sweetly, are the expertise of Mandla Mfeka and his hardworking warehouse team at USM.

This star team set a sweet example for the rest of their colleagues at the sugar mill of how to address a problem with a brilliant plan to benefit USM and keep its customers happy.

Mandla spoke to Umbonowethu about the sweet taste of success in the warehouse. When faced with a space problem to stack enough sugar for the off crop season his team put their minds to it and came up with a brilliant solution that benefits all.

The proud manager explains they decided to build the sugar stacks higher in the warehouse to be able to fit in more stock for those out-of-season months. With clever packing and stacking the team are now able to let one stack of sugar reaches 5 stacks high and 17/18 stacks across (horizontal).

"With having more sugar stock in the warehouse we will be able to cater for our customers in the off crop season before crushing starts again. This means we don't have to inconvenience our customers with not having sugar in stock and we all know if the customer is happy business is good," laughs Mandla.

With commitment his team was able to stack a record 70 full loads in just one weekend. According to Mandla the warehouse team

plans to store more than 20 000 tons of sugar from now one. *"We have made the breakthrough and must keep it up now,"* he confirms.

This manager is rightly beaming with pride about the innovative ways his clever team are coming up to fix problems and to introduce more efficient ways of working at the plant. *"This is how I have always known my warehouse colleagues to be – they are pretty hands-on regarding addressing problems and challenges. They face them without fear and dig deep to come up with new or better workable plans."*

To motivate his team, is really easy, adds Mandla. *"My staff are very knowledgeable, they believe in themselves so managing them is a pleasure because from the outset they make my tasks easier."*

Mandla says his team is also always keeping the bigger picture in mind in coming up with improving them and work methods at USM. *"They understand that success speaks wider than the warehouse and that we are part of the bigger USM team. All successes contribute in the company going forward and surviving the present economical woes."*

In dealing and motivating his team he prefers open door communication, inviting staff to



Making a difference! Some of the team members behind the stacking innovation in motion in the warehouse are Dudu Zikhali (top back), Bongani Timamu, Mandla Mfeka, Innocent Sibiya and Sinakhokonke Hlatshwayo (front).

come and talk with me. *"Even if I am their superior I am no dictator and part of the team."*

No wonder the excitement levels in the warehouse are palpable and rise with every stack of sugar going higher. Well done, Mandla and our colleagues in the warehouse for showing us the better way!

Lastly, Mandla has a festive message for his star team: *"I wish my staff good times with their families. Rest properly, travel safely and come back with new zest that we can continue to climb the success ladder even higher."*

Red hot lab shows the way

The laboratory is like the heart of the USM machine - everything that is taking place in the factory gets recorded and controlled in the lab.



Flashing their dazzling smiles for Umbonowethu are laboratory colleagues Cyprian Mngadi, Simphiwe Ncube, Smangele Maphanga, Siphixwe Gumede, Simangaliso Mbhele and Siphixwe Magutshwa.

Smangele Maphanga, laboratory manager, is all smiles when she states that the laboratory team is a small, but great team to work with. *"I would not ask for any replacement!"*

We asked Smangele to share her thoughts on a few work-related topics. Firstly, she feels strongly about motivation. *"Motivation begins with me as a leader, simply by being a respectful, honest and supportive leader of the lab team."*

This friendly woman focuses on giving her best so that her subordinates can contribute their best. She believes in training and audits to improve skills which gives her team members confidence in what they do.

"I like to paint a picture and purpose for my colleagues to understand the main purpose and objective of the laboratory at USM. Then drawing it closer to them so that everyone can understand the value they add in their various key positions in order to achieve our objectives."

She also focuses on accuracy. *"Reporting accurate data is the key to gain trust from our various customers such as the operational departments and management."*

With regards to trust she demonstrates that she has faith in their abilities by including her team members in decision-making processes, whenever there are changes or new projects. *"I involve them and ask for their insight and opinions."*

This transparent manager likes to show her colleagues that she trust them. *"Showing trust actually creates a sense of belonging and that is when workers feel part of a bigger group."*

Positive feedback from management of the various departments also

helps to motivate her team, adds Smangele. She believes in *"teammess"* by encouraging multi-skilling. In order for skills development and growth opportunities must be created.

Openness is another of her management tools as she is open to one-on-one coaching. She also place emphasis in measuring her staff against the wider field. *"USM takes part in the industry laboratory competition. It motivates my team members to see how they perform compared to other sugar mills."*

Smangele cites celebration as an important management tool. *"Every small team and individual achievements are shared and celebrated."*

She is positive about the initiative to incentives when targets are achieved. *"This helps to keep focus and paying attention to details. I have notice a lot of employees coming to the lab enquiring about a daily performance report to check cane crushed, sugar made and LTA."*

According to Smangele the highlights of the year 2018 was the excitement to see USM pushing some boundaries. The best time was sharing in the excitement when the mill crush over 42 000 tons of cane per week!

Looking at the new year, Smangele shares the biggest challenges awaiting her team. *"Currently the lab is using 50/50% wet chemistry and the NIRS-method for factory control figures. We want to switch over to 100% NIRS-method."*

This will be achieved by completing the setting up of LIMS variables and new reports which should be completed by the end of off crop season in 2019, explains Smangele.

Cane supply aims at automation

Seven is a lucky number in many traditions and cultures and came nicely into play this year for the manager of the cane supply section at USM.

Nhlakanipho Dlodlo was a happy man when Umbonowethu spoke to him in October in the run-up to the closing of the plant for the summer break.

According to this Exco member this was his seventh year in cane supply department and best season at the mill with a lot of records tumbling during production.

And he is proud to add that his dedicated team played no small part in the sweet success of 2018's great season for USM.

"We had a fantastic year with a good crop after the previous season where we still had to battle a draught."

Nhlakanipho says the highlight for his team in 2018 was developing a new website to improve communication between cane supply and its suppliers.

So far the feedback from the suppliers is positive and the site is working 100%.

Now it is on to the next big challenge which is to automate more functions at the weigh bridge in 2019 as too many finger errors still occur.

"This will help to accurately capture both cane and sugar trucks information when crossing USM weighbridge."

According to Nhlakanipho a capital budget plan was drafted for this envisaged automation and will be submitted soon.

The cane supply manager confirms that although USM had a splendid season the wider sugar industry is still under a lot of pressure with sugar imports that affected the sugar price and RV price for local farmers.

Government has bailed the industry out by increasing the import tariff but more aid is still needed to stop or reduce the imports as soon as possible, states Nhlakanipho.

He cites building better relationships with the 2000 small sugar cane suppliers and more cane to crush as key performance areas that will be the main focus in the new year.

"We are continuously focused on this and we want to improve in 2019."

His special Christmas wish is more cane to crush in 2019 to continue to set new benchmarks. *"We are on a roll after this season and past our targets and wants to follow suit in 2019."*

Nhlakanipho wishes to thank his team for their hard work and commitment to see this record-breaking year at USM through.

"After a challenging season they now deserve a well-earned break. I wish them well and to enjoy their time with loved ones. We need fresh bodies and bright minds to apply in the new year."



Record breakers they are! The A-team who made sure the mill never ran out of sugar cane to crush this season. From left are Sihle Myeni, Anne Kene, Innocent Mthuli, Thembeke Maseko, Senzo Mahlinza, Sabatha Zuma and Nhlakanipho Dlodlo.

Clean Cane Campaign gets a boost

Quality sugarcane is a prime prerequisite in the processing of products at Umfolozi Sugar Mill that can compete with the best in the sugar industry.

Therefore the plant welcomed funding from SASA, which was partly used for training purposes to enhance sugarcane quality.

The funding is part of SASA's GDA (Grower Development Account) and was given for implementation by USM for sugarcane quality training of Small Scale Growers (SSG) and New Freehold Growers (NFG).

USM uses approximately 2 400 active small scale growers and 11 new free hold growers in obtaining sugarcane for the mill.

According to Thembeke Maseko, MGB Liaison, the training sessions on cane quality during the 2018 season included cane cutting and bell loader trainings. It was aimed at reducing fibre and ash at loading which would result in poor extraction if sent to the mill.

Other topics at training sessions included mechanical and agronomic courses to aid farmers with better upkeep of their implements and improve agronomic farming to further enhance cane quality at harvest achieving sustainability.

Five SSG grower children were selected and four attended a Junior Sugarcane Course in October on assisting their parents with better farming practices and to build confidence as farmers. The wider aim is to empower communities. The remaining candidate will be trained in the next season.

USM also selected and appointed a trainee at Cane Supply from the surrounding Mtubatuba community in the Madwaleni area for development and experiential training. Phumzile Cele (Cane Supply Trainee) is now earmarked for Senior Sugar Cane training in the 2019/20 season.

In total, 148 SSG and 140 NFG candidates have

been trained to date, states Thembeke. She adds that the response to the trainings was positive from both the NFG' and SSG growers.

This in turn has improved USM's relationship with the growers who are more receptive to applying corrective measures if there is a deviation on cane quality and keep them positive towards attending training workshops in partnership with other stakeholders.

USM in partnership with DARD and SASRI also initiated the seed-cane scheme programme, with the aim of assisting SSG growers to accessing clean, good quality seed-cane at cheaper rates and help them to replant the cane that was lost during the drought period.

SSG growers will now be able to plant newer and better performing varieties like N58, N41, N36 and N49. A total of 27.2 hectares of seed-cane has been planted, during which SASRI/ DARD and USM extension staff worked closely with the farmers on development of the plots until harvesting.

A total of 11 co-operators participated in Phase I: the seed-cane is sold at R400 per ton and 985

tons would be attained from the 27.2 hectares.

Thembeke confirms that the seed-cane is excellent at present. Phase II initiated by USM through the Mill Cane Committee, with a budget of R500 000, will establish 19.5 hectares – about 19 co-operators will each plant 1.5 hectares.

Action was also taken with awareness engagement workshops with Far North growers after problems with cane that was not mature and affected purity among others. Freehold farmers mostly experienced issues of ash and fibre resulting in poor extraction.

Thembeke says the workshops yielded positive results as harvesting cane that is not ready for harvesting declined. Overall the relationship with all growers improved making it easy to rectify or apply corrective measures when cane quality issues are experienced.

She is glad to add that relationships have improved drastically with the greater community that USM serves and with all the initiatives in place it guarantees excellent development!

	SSG STATISTICS			Land Reform and LSG			
	Fibre	Purity	Ash	Fibre	Purity	Ash	
June	7	26	3	June	38	29	25
July	10	67	9	July	44	20	34
August	25	70	24	August	36	3	48
September	14	36	23	September	28	3	60



SSG Zone leaders - The chairpersons of Mngobokazi zones under the Vezithuba MCC were recently at the Cane Supply offices with colleagues (back from left) Senzo Mahlinza and Thembeke Maseko. The grower and zone leadership joining them are from left of Thembeke: M. Dlamini, J.M. Mbuyazi, N. Zikhali, T. Zikhali, M. Gumede and USM's Phumzile Cele and Sihle Myeni. In front is zone leaders M.A. Zikhali, G.S. Mthembu and H.L. Mnguni.

Shhh...silently they make your life a breeze!

The lovely benefits employees at Umfolozi Sugar Mill enjoy for free or subsidised must never be taken for granted, says Terry Bazley, civils foreman at USM.

We visited Terry to find out more about the small team he heads up who work diligently 24/7 behind the scenes to make life of USM employees at work and home pleasurable.

Terry and his team are tasked with maintaining the plant, including the village and the houses and hostel for workers around the clock.

Terry stresses that USM employees must never forget how lucky they are with an employer that provides free subsidised-housing with air-conditioning in a village, including a quota of free electricity and water!

The civils team maintain the houses and the USM Village and keeps it clean, painted and in a pristine working order. This includes fixing anything from sewerage to bursting pipes and toilets to painting, revamping or removing of ants and snakes and maintaining the aircons and gardens.

The same applies to the factory site and

the sports fields where all maintenance is done by this small team. They also ensure that the factory is spotless since USM is bound by international safety and clean rules and regulations.

Furthermore the civils team provides clean water to households and the hostel as well as water safe for factory-use. Three team members make sure that water from the Umfolozi river is safe for human consumption as well as good enough for factory use.

Compared to the last two years' draught conditions, this year has been a breeze with water provision as the river has enough of it, states Terry.

This experienced hand that is now nearing retirement, has an important message to all USM employees. *"Don't take your lovely benefits for granted. And remember the privilege of having a home is a two-way street where every owner has a responsibility regarding that you have been given by your employer."*

According to Terry homeowners should care for their homes and make it a happy place to

grow a family. *"Keep it neat, plant plants, irrigate with the water that is provided and put a personal stamp on it."*

He reminds employees that certain maintenance stuff can be done by people living in the houses themselves. Like buying a seal washer and fixing a dripping tap or changing a light bulb.

He also urges homeowners to be careful what they put down their drains as oils and fats causes blockages that can be easily avoided.

He believes to regularly compliment his small team on their important tasks to keep everything clean, safe and in working order at the plant and in the village. *"My staff must know their contribution is appreciated."*

Umbonowethu wants to set an example to all USM colleagues to more openly express gratitude to the civils team who fly under the radar but works hard all over the show to brighten our lives day in and out.

Feisty protector who has our back!

Do no harm. That is short answer to what makes the newest member to our management tick. And Gwen Wareham lives and works this around the clock. Only a few months into the job, the new compliance manager at USM is set to make more welcoming waves with her mind set and kind philosophy to harm no one and nothing!



Gwen Wareham, Compliance Manager, is looking forward to ensure that USM stays compliant to all relevant operational regulations in 2019.

Yes, she is a greenie and openly proud of it, admits Gwen. In fact she means serious business with this because she believes the clock is ticking fast for the human race to get the ducks right and in a row.

"The pressure is on for human beings at work places and away from it to start protecting everything that needs to be taken care of. We

have only one Earth and must look after it and leave it a better place for future generations. That is our responsibility and presents our biggest challenge across the globe."

Gwen feels it is important for all employees at Umfolozi Sugar Mill to understand this and be knowledgeable about their role as protectors at home but also here at the workplace. *"USM is situated in a sensitive green area and is part of a wider natural heritage. We all need to take care of it and be alert on how we treat our environment and spaces here and on a wider level too."*

This straight-talking and goodhearted woman is ready to lead from the front and already sets a fine example for colleagues.

She takes her job title clearly very serious and explains that she is tasked to ensure that USM are statutory and mandatory compliant regarding all laws and regulations.

She considers her biggest challenge in 2019 to sort out and make sure that USM comply with all environmental requirements. She knows it is minefield with interest of internal and external stakeholders in the mix.

But this grandmother has an ace up her sleeve because she knows she is equipped with the right ammunition in her arsenal for the tasks at hand. It revolves around her life motto not to harm anything or anyone.

"We must minimise our negative impact

on the environment and start to be protectors. This is my passion."

She believes people working for USM is smart and experienced and will take ownership of their areas. She hopes to tackle the challenge of waste management at the plant in the new year.

But work is also about play, adds Gwen. *"It is important to have fun at the workplace too and to show it. One must take the good with the bad. People get motivated by good intentions and energy - it rubs off and can be contagious,"* she states.

In only three months her biggest accomplishment so far is to get colleagues and each team she works with to trust her. To realise that she is authentic and transparent in what she shares and how she cares.

"The sugar industry is small, good and trusting relationships are paramount for success. Trust can only be established by words, deeds and actions and build on by integrity and honesty."

She wishes her colleagues safety rest and peace over the festive time. And please, to keep in mind the importance of recycling.

"Be aware of your impact on everything."

Gwen Wareham is the type of employee and manager every company desires. She is passionate about people and life and likes her job. And, yes, you bet, she loves to show it!



Sista on a mission up! Engineer-in-training Sakhile Nkosi discusses technical stuff with colleague Drienie Humphries.

Girl in golden league...

In a fast-changing world, multi-skilling has become a golden tool to stay relevant as an employee. To be that and a mentor at the same time put you in a different league all together!

Someone who boasts both sets of these superior skills is Drienie Humphries, a kick-ass planner at Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM). This bright female powerhouse is as popular as a person among her USM colleagues as she is her in-demand work and life skills.

Multi-talented Drienie knows the value of hard work and commitment towards building your career step by step. She now likes to give back to colleagues and shares the lessons she learned on her way to the top. Umbonowethu asked Drienie about her career background which has paved the way to where she ploughs back as planner at USM but also add so much more value as a colleague and mentor on a daily basis.

Now nearing her fifth decade in human years, Drienie has started her career at the bottom after she finished her studies. Firstly, she did her apprenticeship, later was promoted to a foreman for 15 years and eventually breaking ground for sisterhood by becoming a qualified millwright working underground. To fix and maintain machinery was a part of her job description.

In between she was electrician and fitter & turner. Then someone heard she was well-spoken and highly knowledgeable about her career and life in general and before she knew it she was lecturer at the Carletonville Technical College where she taught students in maths, electrical science and electro-techniques.

Her mentorship role was a natural follow-on and one she really uses on a daily basis at USM. Not officially part of her current job description, she does it in her spare time and loves showing youngsters the ropes.

"Colleagues who have finished their studies and started to work here have usually sufficient book knowledge but are not always so clued up with what is happening or working in practice and real life."

That is why you will often see younger colleagues in Drienie's office, asking for her advice. She is very willing to help but also strongly believes they have to think for themselves. *"I like to fire questions back to them so that they can learn to think and hopefully get to the right answers on their own."*

According to Drienie she likes to get the message across that as future engineers they have to make decisions for themselves. She also shares with them the important role of communication and being a good communicator in the workplace and often adds a few vital lessons life has taught her.

"Being older and with enough experience I am now able to help them with tips and advice on how to build their careers and avoid some pitfalls."

As USM place a high importance on the training and development of its employees and notably the younger generations and future leaders, these colleagues need a mentor in close work proximity.

In fact, every company needs mentors and USM is privilege to have such a bright and willing mentor in Drienie around to guide and steer youngsters on their way to the top.

Training keeps employer and employees happy

The training and development of employees will always be a top priority at Umfolozi Sugar Mill (USM).

It is an ongoing process as workers need to stay relevant and have the right set of updated skills to keep functioning at an optimum level. The creation of training opportunities is a two-way process - workers develop and grow personally and stay abreast of progress for career purposes while the employer benefit by having employees equipped with more and/or the latest skills to improve productivity and job satisfaction.

In 2018, a total of 171 USM workers did various training courses at the plant and elsewhere. This consisted of training in technical, health and safety, legislation, administrative, human resources and financial skills. Nine apprentices started with training in the area of instrumentation, fitting and turning, electrical and plater welding. It is a three phase-training module over three years.

Other training courses presented consisted of core sugar boiling skill, learning about slings and types of shackles and about safety, cleaning and to push fallen cane to the main carrier. Some workers learned how to light fire in the boiler, unshock feeders, ensuring there is sufficient bagasse coming to the boiler, how to report any defects and the closing and opening of crown valves.

The evaporator operators attended a sugar manufacturing course offered by the sugar industry that is a prerequisite for all sugar mill operators. Process supervisors and foremen attended a sugar technology course.

Forklifting is an essential trade in any sugar mill and USM ensured that its 26 forklift drivers attended this course, while other colleagues can now write a Certificate for High Voltage Switching behind their names.

All the USM fabrication maintenance welders had training in welding. Financial training included how to report better on financial statements and reports as well as better technical report writing.

The training also included off-site first aid training. At the Shukela Training Centre maintenance workers completed a fitting skills course.

As everyday is an audit day at USM to ensure that the sugar mill keeps its international FSSC accreditation, nine employees went on a FSSC training course.

A successful SARS workshop was presented in the canteen in September for all employees. SARS officials assisted workers with enquiries and problems and the completion of their tax returns.

With a new year around the corner the HR department of USM will once more be ready and willing to assist employees with a variety of training opportunities in 2019!